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THE GROWTH OF MIND AS A REAL AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE FORMAL ON THE REAL

II

CHAPTER IV

ASSIMILATION ON THE PLANE OF REASON

We have now reached the end of purely dynamic reflex-activity in the building up of the real of mind by the assimilation of experiences, although we have had occasionally, for the sake of clearness, to anticipate the next and supreme movement which has been exhibited in its general process (Vid. Institutes), but not in its relation to the real. The highest result of the natural dynamic is that relation of mind to object which we call attuition, and the resultant possession is a multitude of mutually assimilating and fused attuits—what I have called sensational general concepts. The world of experience is as yet to consciousness a crude, yet connected, mass of individuals and spurious generals. Things are fused, not woven. It is the work of reason to elaborate a true organic context.

On the attuitual plane, all presentates fall under the generic name of sensates, and so likewise do all representates. An attuit is a sensate, but it is a sensate of a complex total out there in its complex totality. Our next step in building up mind is, as I have frequently affirmed, activo-active or pure; in brief, a formal energy which deals with the assimilated masses and series delivered to us in sense-experience—assimilated, and, so far, crudely organized. The first moment in this formal activity is percipience, and so forth, as already expounded in previous chapters.

NOTE.—Assimilation (let me repeat) here in the subject is another name for relation there in the object. It is the mind-side of the system of natural relations in so far as these can be revealed to mere sense.

Objects as totalities and the relation of these to the universal and indefinite totality—external relations of time and space or real relations of likeness and unlikeness—are accepted in a rough and ready way, sufficient, however, for animal guidance. The associated aggregate *here* is a reflex of the related aggregate *there*—rude, crude, inaccurate, inadequate, and, from the standpoint of a higher mind-evolution, chaotic. The pure energy of the dialectic process (which is man-mind) advances actively, and with purpose, to differentiate, discriminate, generalize, and rationalize, in so far as it can do so, with a view to an end which is truth; and conduct as determined by truth.

When I say that what is called assimilation of experiences to each other is merely the mind-side or reflection of an already existing objective relation I of course mean primary associations of one presentation with another, *e. g.*, a tree with a field or a tree with its own parts, or the sun and moon and stars with the sky and each other. The moment any presentate has become part of the real of mind it may recur as a re-presentate, and, as such, associate itself with a quite new experience from without. The re-presentate "lion" may arise in my consciousness coincidently with the presentation of a waterfall, and these are thenceforth associated in mind, either externally (space and time) or really, as negating all community of existence with each other.

Assimilation on the plane of reason is like that of attuition, the fitting in of new facts to a general concept, or a reasoned or a causal relation. If they do not fit in, they are left outside in isolation till they find a place in the unity to which they rightfully belong. The most advanced intellect is always engaged in this process of rational assimilation.

The formal movement, as essentially a will-movement, contains in it the principle of activity and of search, which, under the stimulus of end or purpose implicit in it, extends the range of receptivity immeasurably. It does not, however, itself form an addition to the mass of attitudinal or recipient material beyond the consciousness of itself, as a fact and process, when man becomes reflective. Its function is to break up the existing aggregates of experience and, by discrimination and comparison, to raise them into a new and rational synthesis without thereby cancelling them. Its method is analytico-synthetic. It ever seeks, and must seek, purified and causally grounded notions of reality. Sense-reality thus becomes rational reality, not by having the rational imposed on it, but by having the rational in it made explicit. We are here evidently outside the mere dynamics of mind-growth, and are subjecting the total of our

dynamic or natural experience to the operation of a free reason-movement, which tosses about the real as given in sense and contains, in its own process, the process already existent in the universe of things, which (under the impulse of search for end) it seeks to make evident. With every step of true advance it comprehends more of actual reality of the individual and the whole.

Formal reason, as a process whose root is will, *first of all* reduces sensates, presentative and representative, and their associated and assimilated products to the unity of self-consciousness and affirms them. This affirmation emphasizes and accentuates the attitudinal experience. The natural thus at once becomes the rational. The truth of the individual sensate is in the percept; the truth of the attitudinal whole is in the concipient one or unity; the truth of the vague and floating "general" is in the general concept; the truth of vague relations, which are merely felt, is in the necessary connections of a syllogism, inductive and deductive; the truth of invariable sequence is in the causal relation. But all this adds nothing, I say, to the building up of mind, save itself as form; it merely transforms all the matter of recipience from sense into reason, and so rationalizes experience under the supreme causal conception: and this, in truth, is philosophy in its widest sense.

This reason-movement, however, is not a one bald-headed act; it is a process. The various steps of the process, each one of which must be taken if the end—truth, knowledge, or science—is to be reached, have been explained in previous chapters, (Vid. Institutes), viz., percipience of the individual, concipience of the many in a one "thing," the gathering of "single things" into a general concept in the search for the essence of things, the relating of these through the syllogistic process and the causal category, which last is the implicit purpose of the whole movement. Thus the matter of recipience is, by a pure activity, affirmed, coördinated, and correlated into a rational whole.

To what extent and how does the emergence of this mind-energy affect the doctrine of assimilation? The answer is, that the process of organic growth is generally the same. A sensate

in becoming a percept has its facts emphasized and a nail, so to speak, driven through it into the conscious subject so that the remembrance of it is made more secure. But the material to which new matter is to be assimilated is now represented (not by the vague associated aggregates of sensation but) by the resultant products of reason intromitting with the matter of recipience, viz : individual concepts, general concepts, and the synthesis of the syllogism and of causal relation. A new experience is taken into these respectively, if like ; if unlike, it is rejected or, if already there by some error, it is thrown out. The general rule is that we assimilate the new to already existing concepts and reasonings. Thus the truth of things is attained—a long process as the history of thought and of science shows, but not a futile one. By assimilation and negation, *i. e.* by analysis, assimilation, and negation, a true synthesis is finally attainable.

Two agencies, we thus see, are operative in the building up of man-mind, viz : (*a*) The inner organic movement or process of assimilation whereby, like the building up of cells in the plant, there is dynamically built up or absorbed into the conscious subject as recipient, and fused into like masses and series by the help of reflex activities, all of non-subject that is within the range of each individual : and (*b*) the formal will-energy whereby we weave our formal selves or dialectic into what we thus receive and have rudely organized, and so construct the temple of knowledge out of the bricks and mortar of associated and assimilated sense-data. The man who could trace, step by step, the dynamic process of assimilation and the subsequent interweaving of the dialectic, would have a vision which would yield a final criticism of knowing.

Educational Reference.—The principle of method here is the same as that yielded by assimilation on the sensational plane.

Suggestion; or Dynamic Recurrence

The process of the building up of mind, we have found, has to be considered in itself both as an attitudinal or real process

and as a rational process. That process we have found to be the presentation of a "difference" (a new thing) as a negation of the existing content of mind and the integration of that with the existing content so as to widen and deepen that content. But we have also found that a new thing, a difference, a negation, may find no community with the existing content and stand outside as an isolated fact awaiting more material whereby it may be connected with the content of mind and enter finally into its contexture as a real whole. At the attitudinal stage of mind-building, this isolated fact tends to fall out altogether, but at the rational stage it may be seized upon purposely and affirmed and so held *in retentis* till it finds an explanation through the accretion of fresh material. On the other hand, new facts that cohere with the existing content find that they share in the permanence of all the facts already in mind with which they cohere. They all seem to stand or fall together in memory.

Hence we say that any one fact or element in a mass of real content tends, when it arises in consciousness, to suggest or recall the other facts which go to constitute the whole.

The expression "association of ideas" is an unfortunate one and has led to much confusion which, in so far as I can ascertain, lies in the treatment of the subject and not in my own incapacity of understanding. The word "idea" is used in the sense of the recurrence as an "image" of what was first of all a presented reality. The vocable which states this fact of mental experience and begs no questions is "representate," not "idea."

If this be so, the general law is simply this: *Representates tend to recur in consciousness in the relations in which they primarily occurred as presentates.*

Consequently, if $a\ b\ c$ occurred together or in relation in consciousness the emergence of a in consciousness will suggest $b\ c$, and so forth.

A gun fires, and I am told that it is a signal from a ship in the roads which wants a pilot. When a second time I hear a gun firing, there arises the presentation ship and the putting off of a pilot from the end of the pier.

And this is simply to say that *the related elements* (or parts) *which originally went to constitute a whole in consciousness have a tendency to suggest each the others in representation, and that also a whole suggests the parts.*

Now, what are these original relations? They are the relations of space and time coincident or sequent; or *the rule of contiguity*. Or, they are the relations of likeness which lead to assimilation into connected wholes; *the rule of similarity* (*a*) sensational; (*b*) rational. They are the relation of negation or contrast; or *the rule of contrast*.

E.g., the presentation or re-presentation of a ship tends to stir into consciousness the parts of a ship, and again the sight of a large anchor tends to suggest a ship. Our troops are now on their way to Khartoum. This suggests the desert and all its characteristics, Gordon and modern politics, ancient Egypt and its constant wars of defense in the same unsettled region, and so on indefinitely until the series is interrupted and diverted either by some external occurrence or an act of will. All these are real, or inner associations.

Again, time and space are elements in all experience: consequently, a certain point of time or space will tend to suggest a past experience as having occurred at the same hour, day, week, etc., or in immediate sequence, or at the same point of space. These temporal and spatial associations are external—speaking generally. I say speaking generally, for the vast majority of time and space suggestions have no real connection with the thing or event, while some of them again are real, *e.g.*, 1688 and the English revolution have a real connection. So with the position of the sun and midday.

Further, we may *artificially* associate things and events which have no possible real connection. This external association is effected purposely with a view to taking advantage of the mental fact that *a* is by itself and in isolation difficult to remember, but as linked with *l*, *m*, or *z*, it borrows the memory strength of each link. The memory of each member of a series is strengthened by all the other members, and the one link occurring tends to suggest the others.

Having spoken generally of the subject of suggestion we may now summarize the rules.

Past experiences suggest each other

(a) On the attitudinal or sensational plane :

1. As having been externally related, *i. e.*, through contiguity in space and time, coincident or sequent. (But space and time may be real relations, *e. g.*, 1688 and the revolution in England.)
2. As being real relations of likeness.
3. As relations of contrast.
4. The whole in synopsis suggests the parts and the parts suggest the whole, *e. g.*, the appearance of the gamekeeper will suggest a whip to the dog.

(b) On the reason plane :

1. As parts of each other in the unity or synthesis of :
 - (a) An individual concept ; *e. g.*, cow suggests the parts of a cow and *vice versa*.
 - (b) A general concept ; *e. g.*, "cow" suggests the individuals which enter into the concept and *vice versa*.
 - (c) A syllogistic reasoning, inductive and deductive ; *e. g.*, the premises suggest the conclusion and the conclusion suggests the premises.
 - (d) A causal relation ; *e. g.*, cause suggests effect and *vice versa*.

A rational being may also, I have said, with the purpose of remembering, constitute an artificial and external association of one thing with another ; *e. g.*, the War of the Roses and the Seven Years' War with the joints of the middle finger or anything else, and so facilitate the remembrance of the former by making it a part of an artificial series. Any part of that artificial series may suggest the others.¹

I repeat that writers have often confounded the process of building up the real of mind sensorially and rationally with what are, at best, only the rules of suggestion belonging to the

phenomena of memory—a question which arises only *after* assimilation has done its work in building up the real of mind.

If we keep our eye fixed on the function of assimilation in the building up of our experiences we shall see that there cannot but be a tendency (given the preconditions of memory and imagination) to reinstate a whole experience as it originally entered consciousness when a part of it forces itself, from any cause, into consciousness; and *vice versa*. We should be surprised if it were otherwise.

Further, I would repeat that the distinction between attitudinal suggestion and rational suggestion has not been noted, so far as I know.

Suggestion both on the plane of attuition and of reason is alike dynamic. That is to say, it is not dependent on the intervention of will-reason but arises of itself. It belongs to the process of *reminiscence*. We certainly take advantage of this natural and dynamic tendency to recall the past, but this is a free act of *recollection* and is outside the sphere of the merely dynamic tendency.²

Now what have we found as a matter of fact? (1) That the real or body of mind is built up by assimilating the new to

¹ All the rules of suggestion might be reduced to one, viz.: What has been once together as a whole of experience, remains together. But it is none the less necessary to ascertain the various *ways* in which the parts suggest each other.

² A question here suggests itself. Rational beings can form purposes, and with a view to certain ends, set up in themselves a train of more or less coherent representates of past experience. But when we have no conscious purpose but allow ourselves to be the victim of the inner play of suggestion, we know that we are largely dependent on the external stimulus of some actual presentation to start the train, and that the sudden introduction of a fresh presentation will divert the current into fresh channels. The question is, Does a train of suggestions ever arise in consciousness save at the bidding of the external stimulus of some actual presentation? .

The phenomenon which we call dreaming, when our avenues of communication with the external are closed, shows that it is possible for a train of representates to start itself through the inner activity of the cerebrum. But this is, so far as mind or consciousness is concerned, an external stimulus. I have endeavored to show, elsewhere, that in our waking hours one consciousness may suggest another consciousness which is mediated through the cerebral tissues but not *caused* by its activity. From which it would follow that a consciousness (not a self-consciousness) may equally arise in our sleep and start a series. But generally speaking (I

the already existing content, sensational or rational, so as to make one context or whole; (2) that, as was to be expected, the new is easily remembered if it enter into the context and is assimilated—in brief, if it is a real or inner association; (3) that the external associations, whether of space or time, and also the artificial do not contribute to the real context of mind save in a subordinate sense, and are not so permanent and so readily recalled. They lead nowhere and enter (as such) into no whole.

The consideration of the rules of dynamic suggestion yield no fresh principles or methods of educating the mind which are not already yielded by the principles which flow from the process whereby mind builds itself up; but they confirm the rule that we should connect the lessons we give with as many relevant associations as possible.

Let us now endeavor to discriminate the general functions of mind, first, as restricted by natural dynamics, and secondly, as affected and transformed by the introduction of the formal process whereby the natural is lifted into the sphere of the rational.

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(To be continued)

think we have noticed) we are dependent on external stimuli for a train of representations. Further, that when we form a purpose to break in on a train of consciousnesses with a view to the execution of some act or following out a certain concentrated line of thought, we are dependent on an irresponsible train of associations for suggesting the purpose. But the purpose once subsumed by self-consciousness is then (but only then) master of the situation and resists the ever-repeated solicitations of diverting trains of association.

But what of non-rational beings—the animal or infant-man of attuition? I think it follows, from what I have said of rational beings, that a consciousness may here too arise and start a train without external stimulus. But there is this to be noted, that there are grades of consciousness, and that the lower the grade the greater is the dependence on external stimulus—the more is the mind-organism a mere reflexing surface for the play of nature. This is the condition in which the rational being constantly is when wearied and yielding himself up to rest.